



VENEZUELAN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS

Venezuelan equine encephalitis (VEE) virus is a mosquito-borne virus that is common in northern South America, Trinidad, Central America, Mexico and Florida.

Symptoms

Symptoms of VEE include sudden onset of illness with spiking fevers, shaking or trembling, severe headache, sensitivity to light and body aches. Nausea, vomiting, cough, sore throat and diarrhea may follow. Full recovery takes one to two weeks.

Treatment

Because VEE is caused by a virus, antibiotics are not effective. The only treatment for someone infected with VEE is supportive care.

Vaccination/Prophylaxis

A live vaccine is available as an investigational new drug. A second killed vaccine is available for boosting antibodies in those who initially received the live vaccine.

Bioterrorism Significance

VEE was weaponized by the United States in the 1950s and 1960s before the offensive biowarfare program was terminated; other countries have been or are suspected to have weaponized this agent. This virus could theoretically be produced in either a wet or dried form and potentially stabilized for weaponization.

For more information, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378.